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BANGLADESH

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Near East & South Asia

BANGLADESH

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International Affairs

Mob Attack on Chinese Embassy, Reaction

Report on Attack

92AS1318A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Article: "Angry Mob Attacks Chinese Embassy"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] A rumour agitated a few hundred local people in and around Baridhara who stormed the Chinese Embassy there and damaged four buildings inside the Embassy premises on Thursday evening.

Police rushed to the spot and lobbed teargas shells and baton charged to disperse the unruly mob and protect the Embassy buildings. Police picked up 20 persons from the spot. About 50 persons were injured during the incident.

Immediately after the incident, local MP [Member of Parliament] Major (retd.) Quamrul Islam, Inspector General of Police and high officials of the law enforcing agencies visited the spot and ordered the police to strengthen security around the Embassy further.

The unruly mob broke open the two huge iron gates at the rear of the Embassy and entered the premises. They pelted stones breaking the window panes of four buildings inside the Embassy. However, the unruly mob could not enter inside the buildings. The broken glass panes and stones were seen littered all around the premises.

The incident ensued when a rumour spread that a skeleton was recovered from inside the Embassy building.

The rumour spread like wild fire in the area and within half an hour about two thousand people rushed to the Embassy from all corners. They even did not care to verify the rumour before storming the Embassy. The security guards had to take shelter inside the Embassy buildings.

The mob could not inflict major damage to the Embassy buildings as the police who rushed there immediately after receiving the information dispersed the mob.

The Chinese Ambassador Mr. Chen Songlu told this correspondent in the Embassy after the incident that he would take up the issue with the government here. The ambassador said that he was not present during the incident as he was attending a function at hotel Sonargaon but he rushed to his Embassy immediately after receiving the information. He expressed deep surprise and shock over the incident and strongly condemned it.

He considered the incident as unfortunate in view of "our friendly relation with Bangladesh." "We never imagined that such an incident could take place on a friendly soil," he regretted.

The newsmen who rushed to the spot on hearing about the incident asked the Inspector General of Police who

visited the Embassy after the incident what action the administration would take, the IG said "we shall look into the matter."

Asked whether there was lapse on the part of the police guard posted in the Embassy to protect the buildings from attack of the unruly mob, the IG made no comment.

After the incident Police stopped movement of vehicular traffic from Banani to Baridhara, Rampura to Baridhara and Airport Road to Baridhara.

The police restricted the entry of people in the area. The unexpected incident created panic and insecurity in the diplomatic enclave.

Government Press Release

92AS1318B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Jul 92 p 1

[Article: "Government Regrets Incident"]

[Text] An unruly mob attacked the Chinese Embassy complex at Baridhara on Thursday evening on the pretext of a completely baseless and unfounded rumour a Foreign Ministry Press release issued in Dhaka late Thursday night said, reports BSS [Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (Bangladesh News Agency)].

The Press release said at about 7.30 p.m., the mob attacked and broke down two gates, glass panes and electric lamp of the just completed Embassy.

Police on duty took steps to disperse the mob and broke the situation under control.

Immediately on receipt of the information about the incident, Mr. A. H. Mahmood Ali, Additional Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and High Ranking police officials visited the Chinese Embassy complex at Baridhara.

They met the Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Chen Sung Lu and other Chinese diplomats and went round the complex with them.

They also conveyed the regrets of the Bangladesh Government to the Chinese Ambassador and assured him of all necessary measures to strengthen the security for various Chinese establishments in Bangladesh.

The Press release said an immediate inquiry had been ordered by the Government on the incident.

A number of arrests from the scene have been made. The culprits would be brought to book without any delay, the Press release added.

Measures have also been taken to strengthen the security of all diplomatic missions in general.

Meanwhile, the Home Ministry said that the incident took place in the Chinese Embassy complex on an unfounded and baseless rumour and that the Government would take firm action against the culprits.

Foreign Minister's Visit

92AS1318C Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
4 Jul 92 pp 1, 6

[Article: "Mostafiz Visits Chinese Embassy"]

[Text] Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman visited the newly completed Chinese Embassy complex in Dhaka at Baridhara diplomatic enclave yesterday afternoon, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister met the Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Chen Souglu, and expressed his deep regret for the unfortunate incident at the Embassy Thursday.

An unruly mob attacked the Chinese Embassy complex evening on the pretext of a completely baseless and unfounded rumour. The mob broke down two gates, glass panes and electric lamps of the Embassy.

The Foreign Minister termed the incident as most unfortunate and said the government and the people of Bangladesh were deeply shocked as both the countries were traditionally enjoying the best of relations.

He said the government had already instituted an inquiry to investigate the incident and the guilty would be punished according to law.

The Chinese Ambassador expressed his gratitude to the Foreign Minister for visiting the Embassy complex.

Mr. Mostafizur Rahman went round the complex to see the extent of damage. The Additional Foreign Secretary, Mr. A. H. Mahmood Ali, accompanied him during the visit.

UNB adds: Authorities have tightened the security around the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka following Thursday's mob attack on the chancery.

Four platoons of police have been deployed at the complex of the Embassy at the diplomatic enclave of Baridhara, police sources said.

The Embassy came under sudden attack Thursday night after rumours spread that human skulls were found inside it.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court sent all the 19 people arrested in connection with the incident to the central jail after they were produced before the court on Friday.

Ding, First Secretary of the Embassy, told UNB on Friday that about 40 officials and staff of the Embassy were inside in the chancery at the time of attack. They are safe.

Safety of Foreign Missions

92AS1318D Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER*
in English 5 Jul 92 p 5

[Editorial: "Mischievous"]

[Text] China and Bangladesh have been on the best of relations since before Bangladesh's emergence as a sovereign, independent state in 1971. And anything even

most remotely likely to disturb them is the last thing one could ever expect to happen. Thursday's incident at the Chinese Embassy is a pure work of mischief which we roundly condemn with all the force at our command.

This may have been caused by one of two things: an incriminating rumour of which there was no basis whatever, spread by some to settle private scores, or a political motive for creating bad blood between two so friendly countries. For the latter, though, we see no reason whatever either.

It is just a blow from nowhere which should be treated with the contempt it deserves. The government or people of Bangladesh share this contempt and have nothing to do with the mischief.

Among monuments to Bangladesh-China good relations is the recently constructed China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge across the Buriganga, linking Dhaka city with the rural interior of the district, for which Dhakaites in special are so grateful. China has kept up its helpful participation in some other development projects including more bridge constructions. In such contexts the incident of the Chinese Embassy being stormed in the way it was on Thursday is a senseless discordance. Along with government and the people we deeply regret it.

One thing however we would ask of the government is to take serious note of a thing that has happened for the first time in Dhaka to a foreign mission in the so-far-undisturbed diplomatic quarters of the city. To forestall repetition of any such mischief to any of the foreign missions in their diplomatically immune precincts the imperative need is for security measures to be strengthened by deployment of extra forces and by unrelaxed vigilance.

Now that the foreign missions hitherto scattered round the city have been concentrated in a diplomatic enclave (Baridhara) such enhanced security measures are as appropriate as they are most important under the circumstances.

As a further deterrent, those found guilty as a result of the investigation now under way will have to be exemplarily dealt with to put paid to such cynics and cynical irrelevancies in the city.

Security Inadequate

92AS1318E Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
6 Jul 92 p 5

[Editorial: "Safety of Foreign Missions"]

[Text] Last week's mob-attack on the premises of the would-be Chinese Embassy in Dhaka has, apart from putting the government into a bit of diplomatic embarrassment, has exposed an inadequacy of security arrangements in the diplomatic enclave in unforeseen situations. The episode in which a few hundred people armed with lathes and iron rods entered the building complex, which had just been completed but not yet started functioning, and carried on their senseless act of

causing damage with impunity has brought to the fore a failure of the police and other related forces involved in intelligence-gathering. The fact that so many people were being mobilised over a reasonable period of time and could make their way to the place of occurrence unhindered is quite disturbing. The diplomatic enclave in which the Chinese buildings are located also boasts of residential houses of officials of the donor agencies, besides many prestigious mansions belonging to the financial elite of the country. As such the area needed greater police care than any other locality of the city. As things ran that day, none of it was there.

The mob had been fed by rumours that human skulls were found inside the complex. It was fuelled by another story that a young Bangladeshi employee of the complex had been missing for some days. It belies one's belief that no member of the law enforcing agencies had heard anything about the developments which had been building up over quite a number of hours. When police finally arrived at the scene, much damage had been done to the complex. A prompt visit by the foreign minister to the scene of occurrence and the institution of an inquiry committee on the incident later on have assured the Chinese about the government's sincerity, no doubt.

Already there have been suggestions that interested political quarters may have had a hand in fomenting the queer episode to dent Bangladesh's time-tested age-old friendship with China. Without going into the substance of such allegations, one can only point out that the diplomatic enclave is a sensitive and special zone which has to be meticulously protected having regard to occasional international political developments as well. The peripheral position of the enclave also makes it vulnerable to intrusion by unruly people. As simple suggestions would go, police should establish permanent camps along routes that are more accessible to the mob.

The incident should be a lesson for the police and should prepare them with contingency plans for the future so that they can effectively face any recurrence of it, especially in a diplomatic enclave.

We join the nation in strongly condemning the mindless attack on the diplomatic establishment of a friendly country.

Visit of Saudi Economic Delegation Reported

Meeting With Businessmen

92AS1330A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
26 Jun 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] The visiting Saudi Deputy Minister for Finance and National Economy, Dr. Jabarah al-Sarisari has stressed the need for increased bilateral trade between Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh.

He said, "Good potential exists" between the two countries for expanding trade. Both the countries should look forward to enhancing volume of trade, he said during a

meeting with the members of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at its conference room here yesterday.

Responding to a suggestion of FBCCI President Mr. Mahbubur Rahman who initiated the discussion, Mr. Jabarah said the businessmen of the two countries should exchange frequent visits to explore the possibilities of expansion of bilateral trade. He, however, agreed with the FBCCI that the current level of Dhaka-Riyadh trade is not at a satisfactory level. Dr. Jabarah led a 13-member Saudi team to the seventh session of Saudi-Bangladesh joint commission that ended yesterday.

The Saudi team also responded favourably to another proposal for a joint chamber agreement between FBCCI and the national chamber of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Deputy Minister for Health, Dr. Yakub-al-Mazrou and other members of the Saudi team and Mr. Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary Economic Relations Division (ERD), Miah Abdullah Wazed, MP [member of Parliament], Mr. Rezaul Karim, MP, Mr. Waliul Islam, Vice-Chairman of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), and other FBCCI executives and members were present at the meetings.

Earlier, in his opening address, Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, has invited Saudi technical assistance to develop capabilities of Bangladesh's private sector institutions of which the FBCCI is the apex-body.

Mr. Rahman said the Saudi technical assistance to the private sector would be a positive contribution towards economic development of Bangladesh as this sector has the responsibility of entire trade and investment activities. The FBCCI President called for exploring the possibilities of expansion of bilateral trade between the two countries through exchange of visits by businessmen from both the sides.

Referring to Saudi-Bangladesh trade, he said the volume of trade between the two countries is very small. He said the balance of trade is in favour of Saudi Arabia and during 1990-91 Bangladesh exports to KSA [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia] stood at 6.49 million U.S. dollars against import of goods worth 77.81 million U.S. dollars from the Kingdom.

He said Bangladesh can offer larger volume of fish, shrimps, fruits and vegetables, jute goods, readymade garments, special issued textiles, tea, leather products, handicrafts, ceramic products (sanitary wares and table wares) pharmaceuticals, PVC pipes, particle board, cables and wires, stainless steel, cutleries, aluminum utensils, footwear including PVC and rubber slippers (chappals), electrical goods, mineral water, paper and newsprint etc. to Saudi Arabia. On the contrary, Bangladesh may import more items from Riyadh including ordinary gray portland cement, cement clinker, rock sulphur, rock phosphate, TSP and MOP (fertilizers) which are presently being imported from various countries in large volume, he said.

He said private sector in Bangladesh has been identified as the engine of growth to infuse dynamism and efficiency for quick industrialisation. With this end in view, the investment procedure has been simplified so that local entrepreneurs as well as foreign investors are encouraged, he added.

Mr. Rahman welcomed Saudi investment either in joint venture or 100 percent ownership basis. Investments can also be made in stock market. In this context, he said all investments are fully guaranteed by the government under the investment promotion and production act.

He told the Saudi delegation members that the present changes in the world economic and political scene were making the situation difficult for a country like Bangladesh to face the complexities and challenges arising out of these changes. The integration of EEC, CIS and the unification of Germany had far-reaching effect on the developing countries like Bangladesh, he said.

Mr. Rahman also suggested a joint chamber agreement with the national chamber of Saudi Arabia for promotion of bilateral trade and cooperation in the private sector.

Meeting With President

92AS1330B Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
26 Jun 92 p 3

[Text] The visiting Saudi Deputy Minister for Finance and National Economy Dr. Jabarah Al-Sarisari called on President Abdur Rahman Biswar at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting, the Saudi Deputy Minister said that he had very fruitful discussions with the government leaders and officials on increased Saudi assistance and cooperation to Bangladesh.

He said that Saudi Arabia would provide financial assistance to a number of projects undertaken by the Bangladesh government having emphasis on more joint ventures and collaborations.

The Deputy Minister apprised that his government attached more importance on enhancing bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries.

Dr. Jabarah said that the Bangladeshis engaged in Saudi development activities were putting in their best efforts sincerely as an effective working force.

He hoped that the friendly relations between the two countries would be strengthened further and increase all out Saudi cooperation would be available to Bangladesh at the time of its need.

He conveyed warm and best regards from Saudi King Fahd to the President Biswar.

President Biswar appreciated the timely assistance of Saudi Arabia during the natural disaster that hit the coastal areas last year and in rehabilitation programmes for the affected people.

He sought Saudi financial cooperation in poverty alleviation programme of the country and assistance in building the rural infrastructure.

The President also stressed the need for recruiting more experienced manpower from Bangladesh for Saudi Arabia.

He hoped that the existing bonds of friendship of the two countries would continue to grow further.

He also conveyed his warm greetings and best wishes to the Saudi King and the government.

Among others, Secretary to the Economic Relations Division, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary to the President Ataul Huq, Bangladesh Charge d'Affairs in Bangladesh, Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Abdul Momen Chowdhury and Saudi Charge d'Affairs in Bangladesh, Ali Ahmed Abdul Wahab were present on the occasion.

Aid Pact Signed

92AS1330C Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
26 Jun 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] An agreed minutes was signed in Dhaka on Thursday between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia after the three-day session of Bangladesh-Saudi Joint Commission.

Secretary of the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance Enam Ahmed Chowdhury and leader of the visiting 13-member Saudi economic delegation and Deputy Minister for Finance and National Economy of the Kingdom Dr. Jabarah al-Sarisari signed the agreed minutes on behalf of their respective governments.

As per the agreed minutes, a number of projects and commodity import programmes have been identified for funding under Saudi Assistance, involving an amount of 528 million U.S. dollars.

Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia Abdul Momen Chowdhury, Saudi Deputy Minister for Health Dr. Yagoby Al-Mazru, Saudi Charge D'Affairs in Bangladesh Ali Ahmad Abdul Wahab were present.

During the three-day seventh session of the Joint Commission, fruitful discussions were held regarding technical cooperation and export of skilled and semi-skilled manpower from Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia.

Both sides agreed to intensify bilateral trade and establish joint-venture enterprises. Possible areas of cooperation include rural electrification, roads and rural infrastructure development, education, and supply of petrochemicals.

The Saudi delegation is expected to leave here today for Riyadh.

Earlier the visiting Saudi Deputy Minister for Finance and National Economy Dr. Jabarah al-Sarisari said in Dhaka yesterday that there was great scope for

expanding economic relations especially in the field of trade and commerce between Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh.

The Saudi Deputy Minister was talking to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia when he called on her at her office.

Dr. Sarisari said the two nations could discuss scopes in the private sector and develop trade to their mutual benefit.

He said the Saudi Arabian business community could undertake joint-venture projects with Bangladeshi businessmen.

Dr. Sarisari also expressed his satisfaction over the progress of the projects undertaken with Saudi aid in Bangladesh.

Begum Zia said her government would facilitate private sector initiatives including joint-ventures between the two nations. Cooperation between the two countries could further be strengthened in all sectors particularly in the economic fields. She said Saudi Arabia could increase the volume of its import of tea, leather, fish and garment from Bangladesh.

Begum Zia suggested that Saudi Arabia could take increasing skilled and unskilled manpower from Bangladesh which could help in their development activities.

She appreciated Saudi assistance in different development efforts of Bangladesh particularly in rural electrification. She also mentioned Saudi assistance in the rehabilitation work after the devastating cyclone last year.

Principal Secretary of Prime Minister Syed Hasan Ahmed and External Relations Division Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

Bosnia-Herzegovina Recognized, Mission Planned
92AS1345A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
7 Jul 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Bangladesh is considering to open a mission in Sarajevo, capital of the newly independent state of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkan peninsula, officials said in Dhaka Monday, reports UNB.

Dhaka earlier accorded recognition to the Muslim majority breakaway republic of the former Yugoslav federation. Bangladesh also endorsed the United Nations sanctions against Serbia to force it to stop its brutal atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Bangladesh embassy in Belgrade was also closed down as the authorities here did not recognise the successor of the former Yugoslav federation. Yugoslavia already wound up its mission in Dhaka in early June.

Meanwhile, Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has urged the world body to undertake military operation against Serbia for violation of the U.N. sanctions and its charters.

Economic Cooperation Pact Signed With France
92AS1319A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
8 Jul 92 p 8

[Article: "Tk (Taka) 91 Crore French Grant"]

[Text] Bangladesh will receive Taka[Tk]91 crore equivalent to French franc 130 million as grant from France, reports BSS.

An agreement to this effect was signed in Dhaka on Tuesday between Bangladesh and France following conclusion of the annual bilateral economic cooperation negotiations for 1992 between the two countries.

The negotiations were held between the delegations of the two countries from July 5-7 in Dhaka at National Economic Council complex committee.

The 19-member Bangladesh side was led by Economic Relations Division (ERD) Joint Secretary Faizur Rahman Chowdhury and the 8-member French side was led by the visiting delegation leader, Joint Secretary, Treasury, Ministry of Finance Dev Zerag. The leaders of the delegations of both the countries also signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

As per the terms of the agreements France will finance productive infrastructure-developments of Bangladesh giving the priority to water supply for Dhaka city, telecommunications, TV relay stations and procurement of various commodities. Implementation of the flood action plan was also given due attention during the negotiations and in the agreement.

Besides these grants France is also supporting Bangladesh in the fields of food aid assistance. Forty thousand metric tons of wheat have been received from France during the fiscal year 1991-92.

Regional Affairs

New Foundation Seen Advancing Friendship With India
92AS1250A Dhaka SANGBAD in Bengali 8 Jul 92 p 4

[Article by Sumit Chakrabarti: "A New Horizon for Indo-Bangladesh Friendship"]

[Text] It was on 26 June that a bold step was taken on the path of strengthening Indo-Bangladesh friendship. On that morning the Tin Bigha corridor, which was the cause of bitterness in the relationship between the two countries for a long time, was opened so that the enclaves of Dahagram and Angarpota could establish their links with the mainland of Bangladesh.

It may be recalled that about one week prior to the handing over of the two enclaves by opening the Tin Bigha corridor, the Indian terrorist [as published] organizations—especially the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], which is inseparably linked with Hindu communal forces by hoisting the banner of "Hinduism" and "Hindu State" and a rebel group of the political party called the Forward Block, which set up a strong base in

the Cooch Behar District of West Bengal (headed by Kamal Guha, who was very recently expelled from the Forward Block and also studied in the same school and is a childhood friend of Hussein Mohammad Ershad, the dethroned president of Bangladesh)—were hurling threats at the people of the enclaves that if they tried to cross the Tin Bigha corridor on 16 June, their houses and property would be set afire. The West Bengal branch of the BJP tried its best to build opposition among the people living in that area of West Bengal against the opening of the Tin Bigha corridor. A unit of the BJP known as the Kulchibari Sangram Samiti [resistance committee] did not spare any effort in organizing the movement. In the face of the provocations of the demonstrators, the police finally resorted to shooting, which led to a person's death. But all of this was expected. The fact is that the slogan "to resist the implementation of the Tin Bigha agreement with blood," with which the protesters took a pledge, could not be realized. In the end, even the state leadership of the BJP was forced to admit that their movement against the opening of the Tin Bigha corridor not only failed but also collapsed.

Above all, the main thing is that at the scheduled time on 26 June the Tin Bigha agreement became effective and thereby a longstanding pledge that India gave to Bangladesh finally materialized. Since New Delhi's Narasimha Rao government deserves credit for it occurring, special reference to the firm stand taken by Jyoti Basu's Calcutta-based West Bengal government is also demanded in the transfer of the enclaves.

There is no doubt that the West Bengal government led by the Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPI-M] could not show any significant achievement in the development of the state. On the contrary, the marks of its failure in various areas have become more apparent. Not only that, the incidents of large-scale rigging by the ruling party—the CPI-M—in various elections could no longer brilliantly uphold as occurred on earlier occasions Jyoti Basu's image. On the contrary, it has been weakened to a great extent. (This has become a matter of discussion not only among the various coalition parties in the ruling Left Front government but also now in the CPI-M.)

It is a fact that to general voters there is no qualitative difference between the CPI-M and the Congress Party. Many people respect the CPI-M because compared to the Congress Party's split in organizational and other fields, the CPI-M has a better organization. Side by side, the untiring anti-CPI-M campaign launched by Mamata Banerjee—a militant leader of the Congress Party and a member of the federal council of ministers—at a recent legislative assembly by-election from Ballygunge has unmasked the dirty acts of the CPI-M before the public and thereby largely cornered the ruling party. (This was reflected in the pungent tone of Jyoti Basu's speeches.)

But despite all this it cannot be denied that the CPI-M leadership, especially Jyoti Basu, could rise above petty party politics on the question of greater national and international issues. (But doing such a thing was not possible for them on earlier occasions.) However, in this

regard the role of the West Bengal Congress Party leadership is negative and deplorable. The decision taken by the leadership of the state Congress Party for not cooperating with the CPI-M at various stages of the implementation of the Tin Bigha agreement because of the very contemptible acts of the CPI-M in the Ballygunge by-election, serves as a bright example of its narrowmindedness. (It is contrary to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's outlook for greater cooperation and unanimity.) Narasimha Rao did not follow the path shown by the state Congress Party leaders. He did not forget to consult with the CPI-M when searching for solutions to various problems. The same also applied in the case of the Tin Bigha agreement. Therefore, the CPI-M leadership, especially Jyoti Basu, did not fall short in extending their hands of cooperation to Narasimha Rao. Although the leftist parties organized a nationwide protest against the federal government's new economic policy drawn at the insistence of the IMF and the World Bank, the CPI-M leadership, as a result of Jyoti Basu's personal interference, decided to support Congress Party nominee Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, vice president and a noted leader from Madhya Pradesh—in the presidential election. (Whereas former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh's Janata Party and the National Front stood behind the opposition candidate G.G. Swell, former deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha and a Khasi leader from the state of Meghalaya, situated in northeastern India. The BJP supported Swell. Although the CPI [Communist Party of India]—a sister organization of the CPI-M—supported Dr. Sharma's nomination, a section of the party declared itself more democratic than the CPI-M opposed the Congress Party policy and questioned the justification of favoring the Congress nominee, called for supporting Swell. However, they could not secure a majority in the party. On the other side, a section of the old Naxalite group, which by following the path for building a people's movement formed an organization called "Indian People's Front" or the IPF, extended their support to Swell as an anti-Congress Party nominee.

Whatever the case may be, because Jyoti Basu and Narasimha Rao did not dillydally nor allow other views to interfere with the Tin Bigha issue, it was finally possible for them to implement the agreement. Both of them refused to bow down before the demands of the BJP and Forward Block opposition groups. To halt the deteriorating law-and-order situation resulting from the movement and protest demonstrations, Jyoti Basu took a firm step by stationing a large number of police and paramilitary forces in the disturbed area. They did not allow the situation to deteriorate. Another notable achievement was that while fulfilling this serious responsibility, Jyoti Basu had to solely depend on his own administrative might in dealing with the demonstrators. Although the gradually expanding organizational strength of the West Bengal CPI-M—of which Jyoti Basu is the leader—has increased in the Cooch Behar District

compared to previously it did not multiply that remarkably where the district could be considered a strong CPI-M base.

Why has the protester movement finally collapsed? The state BJP leaders regretted that because of the early disclosure of the news starting from the "suicide squad" to different organized demonstrations, a warning was given to the state government to take the necessary administrative measures. The BJP lost its effectiveness in the face of a large-scale arrest. From the strategic side it was largely negligence on the part of the BJP and the party had to face great difficulty and embarrassment to pay for the damages. Thus, the BJP state leadership believes that working secretly without large-scale propaganda would have not only saved face, but could also have made it possible for the party to gather publicity by magically fascinating the people. During this self-evaluation the state BJP leadership admitted without hesitation that the consequences of the movement on the Tin Bigha question following the BJP's so-called unity march at the beginning of this year, was similar to that of mountain's attempt to rally the mice. [as published] In this connection, however, more than one member of the BJP state party did not hesitate to take Lal Krishan Advani, former BJP president and the current opposition leader in the Lok Sabha, to task. They are of the opinion that Advani did not fully support the state leadership, but only extended symbolic support. Therefore, he could not do anything during his visit to Tin Bigha on 25 June when Tapan Sikdar, the state BJP president, and 11 others were arrested in front of him. This has immensely embarrassed the party. Such an organizationally backward step of the BJP is definitely going to smear the party image. While reviewing the failure of the movement it would be unreasonable to disregard the fact that when Jotin Chakravorty—a former Left Front minister who was expelled from the RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party]—united with the BJP Kamal Guha, another former minister also expelled from the Forward Block but now heading the rebel group—refused to launch the movement jointly with the BJP. The failure of the protest demonstration also does not prove that there was no public support for the movement against the Tin Bigha agreement. In the minds of the local population there has been and still is suspicion and doubt, concern, and fear about the agreement. The Bangladesh Government is no less responsible for removing these things from their minds.

It is worth mentioning in a broader sense that the New Delhi official circle has particularly welcomed the statement made by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman in Dhaka after the opening of the Tin Bigha corridor. Describing Tin Bigha as the "corridor of friendship" in the Bangladesh Parliament on 29 June, Mustafizur Rahman said that the opening of the road of communication has unveiled a "new era of friendship between India and Bangladesh." Thanking the government and the people of India for implementing the agreement, he further said that this makes it clear that both countries can resolve their remaining bilateral

disputes through peaceful negotiations. Praising Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khalida Zia, Mustafizur Rahman declared: "Today's credit goes to the democratically elected government of the country."

The past part of the statement is particularly important for the Indian Government because there is an inseparable link between the Narasimha Rao administration's view of Begun Zia's 25-28 May visit to India and the importance of the current democratically elected government in Bangladesh. More than a month has passed since the Bangladesh prime minister visited India. During this period selfish elements in both India and Bangladesh tried to classify the three-day visit to India as a "failure." However, their evil attempt could not eliminate the truth that Begun Zia's trip to India was very successful from all aspects.

After the brutal murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members living in Dhaka in August 1975, several Bangladesh heads of state visited India. Among them, former president Hussein Mohammad Ershad visited India the most. Many people might think that when he first visited India and had detailed discussions with late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi (and after her brutal assassination his first meeting with Rajiv Gandhi when he assumed the office of the prime minister), a personal relationship was established between the political leaders of the two countries at the highest level. This time also nothing less than the same type of personal relationship between the leaders of the two countries has been established. But the fact is that it is not at all the same.

In 1972 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited India for the first time as the prime minister of Bangladesh. At that time the warm welcome accorded him by the Indian Government under Mrs. Indira Gandhi's leadership was really unique. There was no artificiality behind the Indian Government's extending such a warm welcome to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—the founder of a state that had recently entered the world arena—especially when both India and Bangladesh had the opportunity to bind themselves together with blood during the liberation war of Bangladesh. However, there was another reason for extending such a warm welcome to him. At a free election in 1970 in united Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib and his Awami League Party won a record number of seats in erstwhile East Pakistan and received an unprecedented democratic mandate from the people to rule the country. That is why the government and the people of the biggest democratic state in the world embraced Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was the head of the government of a neighboring sovereign state democratically elected with the support of the majority of people, very warmly. This was the first time after 1972 that the Government of India had the opportunity to welcome another head of the Bangladesh Government who assumed the position of the prime minister as the result of the verdict in a democratically held election and not because of an undemocratic military coup. Therefore, the temperature of warmth at this welcome was similar to that of Mujib's in 1972 and not less.

For her part, Begum Zia acknowledged the warm welcome accorded her and also did not forget to uphold the importance of the visit. All the observers noticed the sincerity in the Bangladesh prime minister's tone when she spoke at the banquet held in her honor by the Indian prime minister. In the words of Begum Zia: "Today I have come here with a simple objective, but it is very important. I have come to extend good wishes on behalf of our people to you. The people of Bangladesh look at their Indian brothers with special respect. Our two people are bound with ties to historical roots. My objective is not only to strengthen those ties but also to create new ones; not only to consolidate our bilateral relations but also to expand them. I believe that you also feel that this should be done. Therefore, we are united with an identical purpose whose objective is to reach an identical goal."

Yes, this was the main theme of Begum Zia's speeches at each and every meeting and discussion: Not only to consolidate but also to expand bilateral relations. The steps that have been taken in the fulfillment of this objective are not minor.

The two issues—the problem of the distribution of the Ganga water and the infiltration of the Chakma [tribe] into eastern India—were discussed in detail. Some might say that such discussions were also held earlier, but nothing substantive was achieved. It is a fact. But the difference between earlier and current talks is that this time the Indian Government discussed issues with an open mind and a viewpoint, which was the final product of a democratic election by the people of Bangladesh. Thus, the Government of India has agreed to supply more water to Bangladesh than agreed upon earlier under a short-term phase of distribution of water. It also agreed to shift from its old rigid stand on implementing a long-term project of distributing water by collecting water from all rivers flowing inside Bangladesh. A foundation for setting up an overall system for distributing water between the two countries was established during Begum Zia's visit and its significance is very great.

Whatever the faultfinders might say, the Begum Zia-Narasimha Rao meetings were a bold step in strengthening the foundation of friendship between the two countries. Many people believe that the consolidation and expansion of Indo-Bangladesh friendship depends on a special type of individuality. Begum Zia's India trip proved the inaccuracy of that concept. As two democratically elected heads of the two countries, their feelings for democracy are beyond question; they are therefore determined to uphold firm steps for a new horizon of friendship that will serve as a keeper of national interests for the people of both countries. In other words, not by sacrificing national interests but needing to safeguard them will this friendship expand. Unconditional cooperation is the pillar of such a friendship.

The implementation of Tin Bigha agreement upholds the new perspective of that friendship, which is based on honesty, sincerity, and a close relationship. During her trip to India, Begum Zia called for relentless efforts in

the drive to eradicate poverty among South Asian people. An assurance of going forward in that direction under Indo-Bangladesh cooperation was also heard in the voices of the genuine representatives of the people of the two countries. This also bears great significance.

Internal Affairs

Case Against Dissolution of Upazila Argued

92AS1346A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] The hearing of the appeal against the verdict of the High Court Division on the promulgation for dissolution of the Upazila Parishad continued Thursday before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, reports BSS.

Dr. Kamal Hossain, appearing on behalf of the petitioners, submitted that the constitution has laid down the basic features of democracy which is to function under the Constitution. The design and structure of the democracy spelt out in the preamble to Article 7 and in Part I and II of the constitution. Particularly in Article 9.11, and 59 the Constitution provides for a comprehensive democratic framework with a sovereign parliament at the top and elective bodies at other levels of administration formed with elected representatives, he said.

On that aspect Dr. Kamal cited a quotation from 'the American constitution'—"Nothing has more contributed to give strength and flexibility to the Government of U.S.A. or to train message of people to work their democratic institution and the existence everywhere in the northern states of self-governing administrative unit, such as townships, small enough to enlist the personal interest and the subject to the personal watchfulness and control of the ordinary citizen. Nevertheless the system of local government as a whole has been not merely beneficial, but indispensable."

Dr. Kamal stated that thus our constitution did not contemplate establishing a centralised parliamentary dictatorship. It contemplates true parliamentary democracy. Thus the Ordinance by which the elective bodies at the Thana (Upazila level) is inconsistent with the expressed provisions of Article 9.11.59. Where there is such inconsistency, Article 7 says such an ordinance is void, he added.

Dr. Kamal also said the Court has thus both the power and the duty under Article 7 of the Constitution to declare this ordinance unconstitutional and void.

The petitioners counsel further said such a change, which effected all 460 thanas and the entire population of the country, could not be made by an ordinance under Article 93 of the constitution. Ordinance making power is a limited power and it is only available when parliament is not in session.

Dr. Kamal said in the present case no circumstances could be shown why immediate legislature is necessary.

The ordinance was promulgated depriving Parliament, which was to meet a week later. Making an organic law, effecting the structure of the Government could only be done by Parliament in a true parliamentary democracy.

He said the present ordinance for dissolution of the Upazila Parishad was ultra vires of Article 93 of the constitution.

After Dr. Kamal's argument, Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed submitted that with the passage of the 12th amendment, the people's participation in the administration of the state affairs at all levels was restored, and the amendment also restored Article 59 and 60 which spelled that effective participation of the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured, he said.

Hearing will resume on 7 July.

Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Barrister Amir-ul Islam and Advocate Zakir Ahmed appeared for the petitioners.

Attorney General Aminul Huq, Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan and Assistant Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mostafa appeared for the Government.

Foreign Minister Comments on Tin Bigha Opening
92AS1328A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
29 Jun 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman said in Dhaka yesterday that the opening of Tin Bigha Corridor would usher in a new era of friendship and neighbourly cooperation between Bangladesh and India, reports BSS.

Making a statement at the Jatiya Sangsad on implementation of the agreement for handing over of Tin Bigha to Bangladesh, the Foreign Minister hoped that the corridor would be established as "Corridor of Friendship" between the two countries.

He said, the solution of the 18-year-old problem is an example that all problems can be solved through peaceful discussions provided there is goodwill and sincerity.

The Foreign Minister expressed the hope that all other outstanding problems between the two countries could also be solved through peaceful discussions in the interest of the peoples of the two countries.

The Minister said, with the opening of the corridor at 11 a.m. on 26 June last sovereignty of Bangladesh has been established over its two enclaves Dahagram and Angorpota.

In this connection, he recalled the Land Demarcation Agreement between Bangladesh and India signed between the two countries in 1974. He said, as stipulated in the agreement the southern half of South Berubari Union 12 and its adjoining enclave was handed over to India and in exchange of Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves were given to Bangladesh.

Simultaneously, arrangements were made to lease out a corridor of 178 x 85 metre connecting Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves with Bangladesh to help establish its sovereignty over these enclaves, he said.

Mr. Mustafizur said subsequently, the terms of the lease of Tin Bigha Corridor were finalised in the agreement in 1982. He, however, said the sovereignty of the corridor remained with India.

In this connection, he recalled his trip as Foreign Minister of Bangladesh to India between 26 and 29 August, 1991. He said, during his visit to India he had drawn the attention of the Indian government toward the significance of the issue.

He said, following discussions between the two governments at official level an understanding was reached on 26 March, 1992. New Delhi, aimed at implementation of the agreement.

Referring to the understanding the Minister said, as the map shows if Tin Bigha Corridor was handed over to Bangladesh, Indian Kuchlibari area becomes a big enclave. He said, it cannot be expected by any body that to help establish link of an enclave with the mainland another enclave is created.

The Foreign Minister said, Tin Bigha Corridor is situated between east and west. He said, Indian citizens use the Kuchlibari Mekhliganj North-South Road across the corridor. As such, he said, the corridor cannot be used simultaneously by the citizens of the two countries. He compared it with a railway level crossing.

He said, in a good neighbourly spirit the government has taken initiatives to solve the problem.

Mr. Mustafizur said, on the basis of the understanding Bangladeshi citizens will use the corridor every alternate hour during day-time which means total six hours a day. He, however, pointed out that in the event of any emergency situation they will use the corridor after evening. Besides, the members of the law enforcing agencies will be able to use the corridor any time, he said.

Banking, Foreign Exchange Conditions Reported
92AS1288A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 11 Jun 92 p 20

[Article: "Foreign Exchange Reserve \$1,550m: Government Firm To Protect Depositors' Interest"]

[Text] The Bangladesh Bank is determined to maintain discipline in the banking sector and protect interest of the depositors, said an official spokesman on Wednesday, says UNB.

"Government stands fully behind the depositors to protect their interest, they have no reason to fear about their deposits," said the spokesman of the Bangladesh Bank allaying apprehension of the people about operation of private banks.

The apprehension stemmed from closure of Abu Dhabi based Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI) for illegal banking transactions and action this week against Chairman of United Commerce Bank (UCBL) for irregularities.

Action against any individual Director of a private bank for his irregularities is certainly not directed against the bank itself but to safeguard the interest of the depositors and the institution by enforcing discipline, emphasised the spokesman.

The spokesman claimed that the banking system in Bangladesh "is very sound." There had been no adverse impact on the overall banking operation following closure of BCCI and BCI.

He admitted certain lacuna in the law giving chances of taking advantages by Directors of the private banks. But following amendments last year in the existing law "we have omnibus authority" to order removal of a Director for his irregularities. Earlier, one could move to the court against such action and obtain a stay order.

Giving figures to show that there had been no adverse impact on the banking operation following disciplinary measures the spokesman said total deposits in all scheduled banks stood at Tk.[Taka]24,549 crore on January 30, 1992. The deposits came down to Tk. 24,517 crore February 6, rose to Tk. 25,285 crore, again came down to Tk. 25,228 crore on May 7, Tk. 25,182 on May 28 and Tk. 25,116 on June 4.

Time deposits, the spokesman added, rose by 10.6 percent from Tk. 17,800 crore on June 30, 1991 to Tk. 19,693 crore on May 14, 1992.

All these figures amply demonstrate that there had been no adverse impact on our banking system as apprehended by certain quarters, the spokesman emphasised.

He however did not show separate figures of the private banks and those of nationalised commercial banks.

While taking no liability for deposits in illegal banking of BCI, the spokesman held out assurance that depositors of BCCI will get back their money.

He said negotiations are nearing completion to refloat BCCI by early August when all small depositors will get return on their money. Even the big depositors will get back their money, if not immediately, but in due course when the bank will operate profitably.

Another report adds: Country's current foreign exchange reserve mounted to an all time high of 1,550 million US dollars to the comfort of the national exchequer, officials said on Wednesday.

This includes 100 million dollars received recently from International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Remittance from wage earners abroad is expected to exceed 800 million dollars during the current fiscal year ending this month as against about 600 million dollars last year.

Export earning has also increased substantially over the last fiscal year, reducing the trade gap.

Most important aspect is that the Government has not resorted to deficit financing—it was within the budgetary provisions, officials added.

Government borrowing from the banking system stood at Tk. 2,188 crore in June last year. It succeeded in repaying a substantial amount and brought down the borrowing level to Tk. 1,642 crore by the middle of last month.

Officials said financial discipline in the public sector and a good harvest in the fields have contributed to keep the inflation rate down at 5.5 percent this year as against 8.9 percent last year.

Industrial and business community leaders, however, expressed concern at the glut of foreign exchange.

"It shows a very bad situation," observed President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry [FBCCI] Mahbubur Rahman.

Overall import activities, particularly in the manufacturing sector, stood much below the target despite liberalisation. None is in normal production, he said.

The FBCCI chief suggested that government should immediately take appropriate steps to overcome the problems of the manufacturing sector to maximise production at competitive price.

Currency Control Change Aids Foreign Investment
92AS1331A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
26 Jun 92 p 1

[Text] The Government has announced a wide range of measures under which exchange control regulations have been relaxed and foreign investment made easier with greater incentive to exporters.

Measures primarily aim at improving foreign investment climate, according to official sources.

Residents of Bangladesh returning from abroad can bring in \$2,500 without filing a declaration to the

Customs authorities. They can open a foreign exchange account and keep the money and take the money out while going abroad.

They can also bring in any amount of money after declaring it with the customs authorities. The money can be deposited in an FC [foreign currency] account or in fixed account to earn interest.

Non-residents can now bring in up to \$5,000 with them without filing declaration with Customs authorities and take back the unspent amount while returning abroad.

Residents can also bring in one kg. of gold on payment of 7.5 percent duties.

In an effort to encourage foreign investment foreign firms and companies operating in Bangladesh will not require prior permission of the Bangladesh Bank for remittance of profit to their head office. Similarly prior Bangladesh Bank approval will not be required for issuance of shares to non-residents in respect of investments for setting up industries in Bangladesh.

Similarly, foreign enterprises or non-residents can now invest in shares through the Dhaka Stock Exchange without central bank approval. Non-residents can buy any industry in auction or bring in money through banking channel, without being subject to income tax.

Liberal incentives have been provided to exporters who can now retain foreign exchange quota up to 10 percent instead of present quota of 2-2.5 percent.

But in the case of exports with high content of imports like naptha or garment, the percentage of quota will be 5 percent. Exporters can now keep their foreign exchange in foreign currency accounts which they can use in bonafide business purposes such as visits abroad. The provision of Bangladesh Bank permission for back-to-back L/C [letter of credit] for exports has also been waived.

The government hoped that the steps will improve investment climate. Banks can now freely open L/C in favour of private sector if it met Board of Investment's (BOI) criteria. Banks can extend loans to foreign firms without Bangladesh Bank approval, according to the new liberal measures announced by the government.

Monetary Bills Adopted Despite Opposition

1992 Finance Bill

92AS1322A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 1 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Article: "Finance Bill Adopted Amid Opposition Boycott"; quotation marks as published]

[Excerpt] The Finance Bill, 1992, as amended by the Jatiya Sangsad [JS] was adopted unanimously to give effect to the financial proposals of the Government and to amend certain laws when the House resumed its sitting one hour delayed on Tuesday morning, reports BSS.

Piloted by the Finance Minister, Mr. M. Saifur Rahman, the bill will come into force from the first day of next financial year (1992-93) beginning today (Wednesday).

The boycotting Opposition Awami League and its allies did not join the House during the passage of the Finance Bill.

Moved by Treasury Bench Member from Tangail, Mr. Mohammad Abdus Salam Pintu, the lone amendment proposed a new provision relating to the obtaining of income tax certificate for registration of any document.

After the amendment was moved, the Finance Minister told the House that his Ministry had accepted it (amendment). He had no objection to it, he added.

The amendment was accepted by the House unanimously, the Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, announced before adjourning the House for 15 minutes at 11.35 a.m.

According to the amendment of Mr. Abdus Salam Pintu (BNP) [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] the new provision will substitute as Sub-Section (1) of 8A Section 53H after Section 8 of the finance bill amending the Income Tax Ordinance, 1984.

The amendment says: "(I) any person responsible for registering any documents of a person under the provision of Clause (B), (C) or (E) of Sub-Section (1) of section 17 of the Registration Act 1908 (XVI of 1908), shall collect from the person whose right, title or interest is sought to be transferred, assigned, limited or extinguished thereby, at the time of registration of such document, income tax at such rate and in such manner as may be prescribed on the value of the property to which the document relates and on which stamp-duty is chargeable under the Stamp Act, 1899 (II of 1899)."

Earlier, moving his amendment for eliciting public opinion on the finance bill Maulana Sakhawat Hussain of Jamaat-e-Islami stressed the need for introducing Islamic economy instead of interest-oriented western economic system.

He criticised the Government for imposing tax on fertilizer and other essential items which might hamper agricultural production. He also demanded of the Government to give sympathetic consideration to the demands of the country's teaching community. [passage omitted]

Supplementary Budget

92AS1322B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 30 Jun 92 p 1

[Article: "JS (Jatiya Sangsad) Passes Supplementary Budget Amid Opposition Boycott"]

[Excerpt] The supplementary budget for 1991-92 amounting to Tk. 2245,95,48,000 was passed in Parliament on Monday night in the absence of opposition excepting Jamaat-e-Islami, reports UNB.

The House also passed a bill granting an advance of Tk. 3433,69,01,000 from the consolidated fund to meet partial expenses of 1992-93 financial year.

Both the bills, moved by Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman, were passed by the House by voice vote without any discussion.

Earlier, the House voted supplementary demands under different head. Out motions on the demands which stood in the name of boycotting opposition members fell flat.

After passage of the bills, the House adjourned at 9.40 p.m. for an hour. The boycott opposition MPs [Members of Parliament] are expected to join Parliament when it is scheduled to meet again at about 11 on Monday night. [passage omitted]

Article Criticizes New Budget, Finance Minister Role

92AS1246A Dhaka ROBBAR in Bengali 5 Jul 92 p 7

[Editorial: "Let the Budget's Incongruities Be Removed"]

[Text] After the presentation of the annual budget in the Sansad (Parliament) by Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman, the president of the Chattogram Industry and Business Association praised the budget as a supportive step toward the country's development. It was his first reaction. But after only two days, he withdrew his congratulatory remarks and issued a statement strongly criticizing the budget. Because opposition parties abstained from the parliamentary session at the time of the budget presentation, it was not discussed in Parliament. Outside Parliament, there were no processions, meetings, or strikes protesting the budget as usually happened in the past. But different trade associations expressed their views by releasing statements in the newspapers and by advertising at their own expense. Basically they are opposed to two things: (1) the proposal to deduct a 1-percent tax at the source to provide some benefits in the export business area; and (2) the proposal to impose a supplementary tax by reducing the rate of import duties.

The association of manufacturers and the exporters of ready-made garments said that the amount of net income is very limited in this industry. Taxing at the source at the rate of 1 percent may easily be over 50 percent of net income. On many occasions, goods are exported even at the risk of financial loss. Moreover, this proposed tax is against the government's policy of encouraging exports. The aforementioned association proposed the total withdrawal of the tax at the source on export income.

The Bangladesh Jute Mills Association also made the same demand. It said that jute products are sold at a lower price than the cost of production in order to remain competitive in the world market. Under these circumstances, taxing the source on export income will simply worsen the present situation. The association also said that neighboring India is liberally helping the exporters of jute products to compete in the world

market. But the Bangladeshi Government withdrew export subsidies and other assistance previously given to the jute industry. The federation of Bangladesh industry and trade associations criticized the policy of imposing supplementary taxes by reducing import duties. The federation said that the prices of imported goods will not decrease by this action. Rather, the expense of importing raw materials will increase, and, naturally, the cost of production inside the country will also increase.

The Rubber Goods Association criticized the government for proposing more duties on the import of raw materials, of which the rate is more than last year's. It also said that the government did not protect the interests of the rubber-belted and other rubber products industries, which could serve as an alternative for imported items. They argued that these proposed taxes were against the declared policy of the government. They further proposed that the excise duty should be reduced from 15 percent to 5 percent.

The withdrawal of a special exemption and the proposal for imposing excise duties on soap produced in the cottage industry were highly criticized. On behalf of this industry, it was said that the imposition of an excise duty and the adoption of the policy of reducing production on the basis of turnover will make the soap manufacturing business an unprofitable part of the cottage industry. It will not be able to exist by competing with the large foreign and national soap manufacturers. The association also said that the proposed new tax will increase the price of soap and the poor people will actually suffer.

In the budget, a 30-paisa increase was proposed for each liter of diesel oil. The owners in the transportation industry are unhappy about it. One leader of the domestic river transportation (passenger) organization said that in the name of a liberal policy, the government is acting against the interest of the indigenous industry. Regarding the oil prices, he said that before the Gulf war, the price of each liter of diesel oil was 6.75 taka. At that time, the price of each barrel in the world market was 18 dollars. During the time of the war, the price was increased to 40 dollars in the world market. Then the price decreased, and now, 1 barrel of oil can be imported for 17 dollars. Under these circumstances, the price of 1 liter of petrol should not be more than 6 taka.

No such action has been taken by the opposition parties against the budget. One reason for this might be that the government did not propose any large amounts of direct taxes in the budget. The political parties are generally more concerned about direct taxes. The other reason was, of course, the boycott of Parliament by members of the opposition on the issue of Pakistani citizen Golan Azam's becoming the head of the Jamat party. Their attention is more toward politics than budget matters. So there was no outcry in Parliament about the budget.

But the biggest opposition came from the owners of the transportation industry. They started a countrywide bus and truck strike on 22 June, based on different demands, one of which was reducing the price of oil. During the

last year, the owners and business associations carried out a huge propaganda campaign against the strike and considered it a severe obstacle on the road to economic prosperity. But unfortunately, one of their partners—the owners of the transportation industry—called for this nationwide strike. Because of this strike, the economy of the country is suffering the most. Industrial, as well as agricultural, productions suffer. Karallas, one kind of delicate bitter tasting vegetable, is sold in the village firm at the price of 5 taka per mon (approximately 80 lb). Millions of takas worth of perishable agricultural products are thrown away. Ready-made garments are stored in the godowns [warehouses]. Trucks are not there to take them to the ports. Those who are trying to take the buses or trucks on the roads to transport the products have petrol bombs thrown at them by people hired by the owners. Consequently hundreds of passengers and laborers are injured. Some of them are killed. In one ward, where Saifur Rahman claimed that he presented a budget on behalf of the owner class, one section of this particular class opposed this budget by calling a strike.

Mr. Saifur Rahman said that this year's budget is designed to increase exports and investment. Whether investment would be increased or not is to be seen. The nongovernmental investors are given many advantages

in this country. But real investment has not increased. During the 1991-92 financial year, there was almost no increase in investments. Even the government did not invest very much.

Everyone must consider the reasons why investments are not made. It has been noted that the infrastructure is one of the disadvantages. If somebody becomes involved in problems by investing, no one would come forward to invest. Doing business is considered better than that. For a long time it has been said that investors would get advantages in the fields of supplies of electricity, water, gas, and telephone connections. There will be less problems with income tax. Bureaucratic red tape would not stand in the way. But in reality, we see a different picture. There are many attractive promises in the new budget but apprehension remains that these will be just verbal promises.

There are many inconsistencies in the current budget. It is true that there was no budget discussion in Parliament. But those inconsistencies are not unknown to the finance minister. It is hoped that he will consider and examine the different proposals and demands about the budget raised by the different circles.

Joint Declaration on Trial of Golam Azam

92AS1320A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 1 Jul 92 pp 1, 10

[Article: "Text of Joint Declaration"]

[Text] A joint declaration by the ruling party and the Opposition agreed to hold trial of Golam Azam as per constitution and law of the land, reports UNB.

Both sides in the declaration, adopted late Monday night, also agreed to withdraw the case against 24 sponsors of "Gana-adalat."

The accord bears the pledge to ensure democratic rights of MPs [members of Parliament] and political parties in and outside parliament to uphold democratic values.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury and Chief Whip Khndaker Delwar Hossain from the government side and Deputy Opposition Leader Abdus Samad Azad and Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim from the other side signed the agreement to end an impasse created by opposition's boycott of the House.

The declaration reads:

Since Bangladesh is the outcome of the Liberation War fought by the masses and democracy was achieved after toppling the autocracy in a nine-year-long joint movement:

And since people of this country elected a sovereign parliament through an election:

And since the people have reposed confidence in it and since the members of this parliament are committed to reflecting the people's will and aspiration through their activities, making honest contribution towards alleviating poverty of the people besides resolving all economic, social and political problems:

And since argument and cross-argument, temporary boycott etc. under accepted parliamentary practice likewise active participation of all members can play a positive role in giving democracy an institutional shape and in its consolidation, which is the sincere expectations of the people, since the Opposition members have not joined the current Budget session of Parliament mainly on the question of Golam Azam:

Since the effectiveness of parliament depends on the cooperation and understanding between the government and the Opposition, since this understanding and cooperation are imperative to give democracy an institutional shape and make it all out success, therefore, in the perspective of discussion and resolution in Parliament, Golam Azam will be tried as per constitution and existing laws of the land.

The declaration said the government had already sent Golam Azam to jail as per law of the land and rejected his prayer for restoration of his citizenship.

With the same objective, the case filed on behalf of the government against 24 persons of "gana-adalat" will be

withdrawn. The lawyers on the two sides will take appropriate measures in this respect.

The declaration further stated sincere efforts would be maintained to preserve democratic rights of the MPs and all parties in and outside parliament in pursuance of democratic values.

Former Air Staff Chief Indicted for Corruption

92AS1329A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 29 Jun 92 pp 1, 10

[Figures as published]

[Text] Former Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Momtazuddin Ahmed was indicted Sunday on a variety of charges including acquisition of property (disproportionate to his income) through illegal means and submission of statement of assets (immovable and moveable property) and liabilities containing false and incorrect information, reports BSS.

Zeenat Ara, First Additional Sessions Judge of Dhaka and Presiding over the Anti-Corruption Tribunal No. 2, brought the charges against the former Air Chief under Section 4 (2) (A) (B) and Section 5(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act of 1957.

The charge included non-disclosure of a three katha plot in the name of his wife Shamim Momtaz at Uttara in his statement. His wife applied in December 1986 and later obtained allotment from RAJUK, although she was earlier (March 1986) allotted a plot measuring 578 square yards (over seven katha) at a nominal price of Taka 578 at DOHS (Defence Officers Housing Society) at Banani.

Formal allegations were also brought against Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Momtazuddin saying that he constructed a four-storied building in his DOHS plot showing a value of Taka 24 lakh, although PWD [Public Works Department] engineers on evaluation found that the building cost Taka 27,68,429.36.

Another allegation against the former Air Chief relates to his purchase of a car (a reconditioned Toyota Corolla) in August 1991 at Taka 5,20,000 in which he falsely showed that the money was given by his father, a Government servant who retired in 1972.

Yet another allegation against him was that he held 1,250 shares of a company named Special Products Limited in the name of his minor son who is still a student. The shares valued at Taka 100 each are held with one M. Shahzad Ali of United Traders Limited and an acquaintance of Mr. Momtazuddin Ahmed.

The charges are that in his asset, the former Air Chief did not disclose the shares held in the name of his son.

The court fixed 1 August as the date for recording evidence. The case against Mr. Ahmed who is on bail began in August last year when the Government ordered enquiry on the basis of some information obtained by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption.

Public Prosecutor [PP] Abdur Razzak Khan with Borhanuddin, Assistant PP, appeared for the state, while Abdul Malek, Senior Advocate, and others appeared for the accused.

Lawsuit To Be Filed Against Mujibur Rahman

92AS1321A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
30 Jun 92 p 1

[Article: "30,000 May Sue Mujib for Killing"]

[Text] Leaders of Shaheed Seraj Sikder Smritee Sangshad would file about 30 thousand cases against late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other persons for allegedly killing them during his regime.

They said Sheikh Mujib and other agencies including Rakkhi Bahini killed opposition leaders and activists including Shaheed Seraj Sikder as they had protested against the misdeeds and misrules of the regime following the emergence of the country.

Dr. Nazmul Haq Sikder, President of Seraj Sikder Smritee Sangshad told a press conference held at the National press club yesterday afternoon that a circle in the Awami League and some collaborators of Indian

expansionism had been threatening to kill the complainants, witnesses and the lawyers of Seraj Sikder killing case filed recently by Seraj Sikder Parishad against some leaders of Awami League and ex-officials.

In a written statement read out by Dr. Nazmul Haq Sikder, who is also a brother of Seraj Sikder the founder of Sarbahara Party demanded immediate arrest of the accused involved in the Seraj Sikder killing cases. He alleged his brother Seraj Sikder was killed under the directives of Sheikh Mujib, the first President and second Prime Minister of the country on January 2, 1975 in the custody.

Demanding suspension of the officials and ban on the political activities of those involved in the killing, Dr. Sikder said they would launch a greater movement with the mass support if their demand was not met immediately.

In replying to a questioner, Dr. Sikder said Sheikh Mujib had surrendered during the War of Independence to the Pakistani Government, Sheikh Mohiuddin, Chairman of Seraj Sikder Parishad, Dr. Azmal Ahmed, Miraj Chowdhury, and other leaders of the Smritee Sangshad were present at the conference.

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